



Foundations of Accountability: Everyone is a Leader

You contribute to the overall success of your organization, no matter what position you hold; even if you're sweeping floors or managing shipments. If you were not contributing most leaders would have furloughed you long ago. The measure of your contribution is in direct proportion to the consistency of your action with this simple truth; the more you are focused on the overall success of the organization, the more you will contribute.

How does floor sweeping contribute? Here are just a few ways. Clean floors:

- Positively impress visiting customers
- Provide safety from slips and falls saving lost time due to injuries
- Contributes to the health of other employees by minimizing dust and dirt
- Increases productivity because lost time equals delayed projects, late deliveries and added costs
- Help people stay orderly and mentally neat and organized
- Sends a positive message that leadership cares
- Provides an opportunity for workers to have satisfaction for a job well done

People who sweep floors are leading other people to stay neat, clean and safe by setting an example. Modeling what others can do to help the organization is the job of every leader. Our sweepers are also managing their work by systematically applying the right efforts, tools and products to their daily challenges to deliver the desired results. These actions contribute to the success of the entire organization.

Everyone is a leader and a manager. They are just leading and managing different things. Years ago we had a little business that employed 5 people. Several had management titles. One day, in an all hands meeting, our expediter, Jane complained that she was not really a manager or a leader and did not belong in the management meeting. She expedited shipments between 25 suppliers and 125 distributors and importers while coordinating the actions of all of these entities through 20 different freight forwarders. When we discussed these facts it became clear that Jane was leading and managing more people and functions than anyone else in the company. She lacked only the manager's title, which

really made no difference to anyone but her. Jane had more power, influence and control than the rest of us combined. Her decisions and actions had impact on every element of success in our little company. To name a few of the things that Jane delivered:

- Customers got what they ordered...satisfaction.
- Received it on time.
- Managed the cost of shipments.
- Impacted our relationships with suppliers.
- Helped us improve processes.
- Kept us in cash and brought us profits.
- Led others to take action.
- Solved problems daily.
- Made numerous decisions on her own.

Jane was the grease in our gears that supported every other function. She was sometimes overwhelmed but she was committed to meeting our standards for delivery and success. She was a leader and a manager in every way but the title.

There are numerous opportunities to lead from any position. The moment you accept a job you are accountable, in some small way like the rest of us, for the overall success of the organization. If you take “ownership” for your job and consciously recognize this accountability then you can lead others deliberately towards success for all.

Quoting T. Harv Eker, author of the Millionaire Mind: “The way you do anything is the way you do everything.” If you put in the effort to sweep floors so that they meet the standard of safety and cleanliness that supports business success, or you expedite orders so that customers are satisfied and happy with the level and quality of service you delivered you can be as effective a leader as any CEO.

It takes 3 essential deliberate actions and thoughts to deliver this kind of leadership from any position:

1. Own that other people are following you.
2. Model what you expect of others. Set an example by delivering at the appropriate standard in the context of collaboration, timing, quality, detail and completion.

3. When making a decision or taking action, always consider the impact of your choices on other people, other departments and on the overall success of the organization.

These same simple rules apply to leaders at all levels; the CEO of a multi-national conglomerate like General Electric or the owner of the little bodega on the corner. Or the guy who sweeps the floor and the gal who expedites shipments.

By the way, we gave Jane the title she deserved and she became an even bigger contributor than before.